

Farm & Forest



King County

Working together to conserve active farms and forests in King County

Fall 2003

Landowners! Take advantage of an Open Space Tax Break

Participation in King County's Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs)

provides an excellent opportunity to

protect open space lands and realize a tax benefit. The following program data show the success of the program since its inception in 1992:



- 5,406 acres and 503 landowners currently participating.
- 10 properties totaling 1,962 acres have been removed from PBRs because they were purchased by a non-profit or government agency for open space protection.
- Amazingly, 96% of the originally enrolled properties still participate, thanks to helpful staff and landowner involvement.
- Only 11 properties, about 100 acres, have been withdrawn from the program since 1992.
- Over 1,000 landowners annually receive PBRs and other assessment information.

Contact **Ted Sullivan** for more on PBRs or other incentive programs, or go to <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/incentiv.htm>

Be on the Alert for Meth Labs

Of the 1,600 methamphetamine labs and dumpsites discovered in Washington annually, about 200 are found in King County. A third of these are

in rural and forested areas.

These toxic waste piles threaten safety, health, and the environment. Property owners are responsible for many of the cleanup costs.

For personal safety, as well as the welfare of livestock and property, rural property owners need to recognize signs of illegal drug labs. Details to watch for:

Late night travel at odd hours and secretive loading and unloading of vehicles.

Boxes or plastic coolers containing:

- Denatured alcohol
- Propane tanks
- Coleman fuel canisters
- Paint thinners (e.g. Toluene)
- Automotive starter fluid
- Plastic gas cans with plastic tubing or yard sprayers
- Mason jars, coffee filters, plastic tubing



The King County Sheriff's Office is working to shut down clandestine labs. Hazardous chemicals cleanup and response requires tremendous

resources and continual training. Responders face threats from toxic chemicals, booby traps, and hazards while serving search warrants. Cleanup costs have skyrocketed from \$450,000 in 1994 to \$5.5 million in 1999 and involve multiple agencies. Costs and impacts to property owners vary widely.

To report a suspected lab or dumpsite, call 911 or local law enforcement. For information on clandestine drug labs, call Detective **Marlon Hoyle**, King County Sheriff's Chemical Precursor Investigator, at **206-205-7867**. Visit <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/CDL.HTM> for more information.

For questions about illegal dumping, contact **Dinah Day** at **206-296-8432**, or **800-325-6165**, extension 6-8432.

Snoqualmie Watershed

Native Americans and farmers are using their experience and historical connection with the land to make a difference through projects funded by

King County grants. The Snoqualmie Conservation Corps and the Oxbow Farm Riparian Restoration Project are taking innovative approaches to restoring prime salmon habitat.

The Snoqualmie Tribe has used the grant to launch the Snoqualmie Conservation Corps. The Corps trains Snoqualmie tribal youth, who are paid a stipend for their work. In their first year, the group planted hundreds of trees and removed invasive plants at a dozen habitat restoration projects.

"The anadromous fisheries are of vital importance to the tribe, and have a significant connection with tribal culture," said Ian Kanair, Director of the Environmental



and Natural Resources Department for the Snoqualmie Tribe. "Hopefully we'll all be able to see some of the long-term benefits of habitat improvement, with improvement in salmon species."

A pilot project by Stewardship Partners used a Community Salmon Fund Grant on a quarter mile section at Oxbow Farm, on the Snoqualmie River. Buckwheat was planted to prepare soil for planting native trees and shrubs in an area previously overgrown with blackberries and other invasives.

"The idea is to utilize farmer knowledge to grow things more effectively and efficiently" said Larry Nussbaum, Lower Snoqualmie Project Manager for Stewardship Partners. "Local farmers know the landscape, and what will grow where."

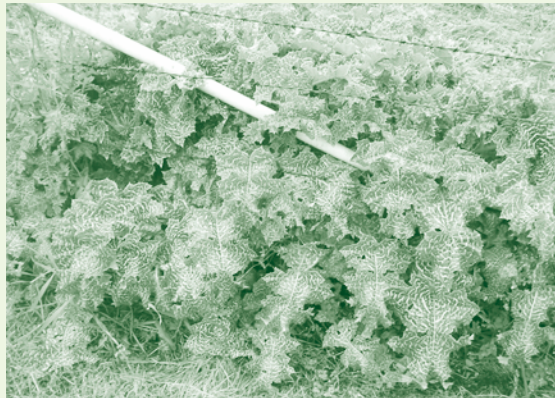
King County runs six environmental stewardship grant programs that provide funding to non-profits, cities, and schools. For information, visit <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grants.htm> or call **Ken Pritchard** at **206-296-8265**.

"Got MILKthistle?" (*Silybum marianum*)

Recently found in local pastures, milk thistle is a 6 foot tall annual with distinctive white marbling patterns on the leaves. A

Mediterranean native, it is sometimes grown as a medicinal plant. In the Pacific Northwest milk thistle is invasive in pastures and lethal to cattle and sheep. Oregon and California both report huge infestations with up to four tons of green weight per acre, with 1.4 million seeds per acre in some areas of California.

Milk thistle is a Class A noxious weed, meaning that



its current distribution in Washington is limited. King County reports the largest infestations; 2003 surveys found and controlled over 2 acres of milk thistle.

When large patches of milk thistle were discovered in

dairy pastures, the Noxious Weed Control staff worked with the landowners to remove plants. A cost share program and disposal vouchers were provided. Noxious Weed staff are working on an Action Plan to prevent milk thistle establishing in rural areas, and the

King Conservation District Dairy Planner will help landowners recognize milk thistle and its threats to pastures and livestock.

For questions on milk thistle or noxious weeds, contact **Noxious Weed Control**.

King County Program helps fund farm practices that protect water quality!

Are you a livestock owner interested in improved management techniques and helping the environment? The Best Management Practices (BMPs) cost share program will match funds with landowners. BMPs are farming methods that keep nutrients and sediment from contaminating surface and ground water, and can make managing a farm more efficient.

Some approved practices include:

- **stream and wetland buffer fencing** – keeps livestock out of streams and wetlands
- **confinement area** – reduces mud through pasture management
- **compost bin** – recycles farm waste to reuse as a soil amendment, fertilizer or mulch
- **filter strip** – uses plantings to trap sediment and nutrients and keep them out of water bodies

To apply, a landowner must have a current King Conservation District farm management plan. There is a simple application process and up to one year to complete projects. For information, contact **Rick Reinlasoder** or **Laurie Clinton**.

Livestock learners win some moola



The King County Agriculture Commission sponsors the annual Livestock Best Management Practices (BMPs) contest at the King County fair in Enumclaw.

Participating 4-H Clubs and FFA Chapters create educational displays for livestock owners about Livestock Management Ordinance BMPs. Club members learn about the ordinance and construct displays of BMPs benefits for the environment and livestock management.

These 4-H youth did an impressive job this year! Winners in the July 2003 contest were:



Christa Nodland
from Beaks & Paws
4-H Club,
\$100.00



Shear Leaders
4-H Club,
\$100.00



Blue Ribbon
4-H Club,
\$75.00

Fire!

Even before a forest fire near Carnation threatened over 200 homes this summer, King County Forester Kristi McClelland received many calls. This summer's high fire risk prompted homeowners near forestland to ask, "What should I do to protect my home?" and "Is the forest near my home safe?" The Carnation blaze is an opportunity for homeowners to learn about risks at the wildland/urban interface.

What should I do to protect my home?

Replacing at-risk roofing or siding is a longer-term solution, but there are immediate ways to reduce risk. The most effective way is landscaping. Remove easily burned materials, store firewood away from the house, and clear dead, dense vegetation 30 feet from a structure.

Firewise, a program affiliated with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, has "Resources for the Homeowner" on-line at www.firewise.org. The site describes components for a Firewise home: choosing a safer location on your property, designing and building less flammable structures, and landscaping techniques.



Whether planning for a new home or an existing woodland home, Kristi recommends checking the Firewise web site, talking to a wildfire professional, and meeting local fire department staff. Plan and prepare in the rainy season for next fire season.

Is the forest near my home safe?

Most local forests are second or third growth re-planted or re-seeded after harvests or other disturbances, and if left unmanaged may be overcrowded. Overcrowded forests become dry and more likely to burn. Thinning and other practices are needed to improve forest structure and health.

Forest fires are complex, but stewarding our forests wisely will help manage fire risk and ensure they continue providing the clean water, air, habitat and products for all of us.

To learn more about forest management, King County and the Washington Department of Natural Resources offer eight-week evening courses in forest stewardship. Assistance on forest stewardship plans is available at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/forestry/index.htm>, or call **Kristi McClelland**.

POO'S CORNER

THERE'S POWER IN THAT BULL, MANURE POWER!

Manure management is a challenge for dairy farmers in King County, home to over 40 dairies and 12,000 mature dairy cows. A single cow produces about 100 pounds of manure daily. Manure is stored in lagoons and sprayed onto fields in the spring and summer. Odor complaints and nutrient management costs are limiting factors in the growth and economic vitality of King County dairies.

A recent study looked at the feasibility of a manure methane gas “digester” on the Enumclaw Plateau. Environmental Resource Recovery Group of Kansas completed a study for the County, King Conservation District, Puget Sound Energy, Bonneville Environmental Foundation, Washington State University Energy Program, Seattle City Light, and a number of South King County dairy farmers.

Building a manure digester is a couple of years away. Work to be done includes site identification, assessment and acquisition, investigation of ownership and operation alternatives, and acceptable cost estimates. One alternative is a centralized Enumclaw Plateau location near several dairies.

A digester uses microorganisms to break down manure solids to produce methane gas. The “bio-gas” fuels an electric generator that would produce “green” power from this renewable energy source. Manure from 6,000 cows can produce 107 billion British thermal units (BTUs), which converted to electricity can power about 800 households. Solid and liquid residuals from the digester can be used for soil amendment and liquid fertilizer.

The King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks already has projects underway that turn methane gas from wastewater treatment plants and landfills into electricity. The dairy bio-gas digester project builds on those successes. For information contact **Rick Reinlasoder**.

WHAT'S NEW IN MANURE

Manure management has changed because of recent revisions to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Chapter 173-350 ‘Solid Waste Handling Standards’ overseen by Department of Ecology. The King County Agriculture Program and Department of Public Health will offer manure management workshops to update livestock owners on the proposed new health code and how to use this valuable resource.

Specifically, composting agricultural waste materials will be regulated based on quantity. It will be exempt from a Solid Waste Handling Permit when:

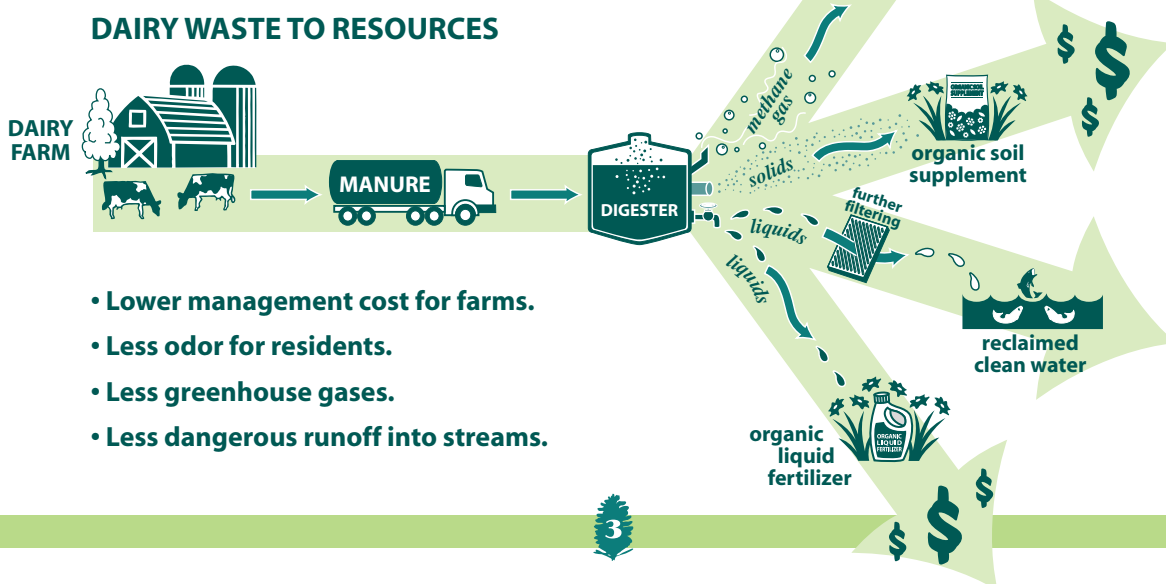
- Up to 40 cubic yards, if performance standards are met
- 40-250 cubic yards, if all compost is used on site
- 40-1,000 cubic yards, if any is sold or given away, as long as performance standards are met and a Health Department notification is filed annually

Composting over 1,000 cubic yards is not exempt. A Solid Waste Handling Permit is required.

Livestock owners will be able to make complete use of agriculture wastes. Local garden clubs, nurseries, tree farms and landscaping companies will be encouraged to partner with livestock owners to take advantage of this useful product.

Manure must continue to be properly stored and managed under the King County Livestock Management Ordinance 21A.30, and Water Quality Ordinance 9.12. To schedule

presentations or for information, contact **Laurie Clinton**.



TAYLOR MOUNTAIN FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN

King County acquired the Taylor Mountain Forest Property near Hobart in 1997 as a working forest to conserve and restore its resources. The Taylor Mountain Forest Stewardship Plan, finalized in August, outlines management for the 1,822-acre forest. View copies at: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/watersheds/samm/taylor-mountain-plan.htm>.

The goals are:

- Protect, enhance and restore ecological systems
- Restore the health and diversity of the forest
- Demonstrate environmentally sound forest management through sustainable timber production
- Maintain forest roads to state requirements
- Provide recreational opportunities for the public
- Enhance opportunities for environmental education

The first timber cut on the working forestlands will be done within the next year on a 60-acre stand dominated by red alder.

Also under development is the Taylor Mountain Public Use Plan. The plan will include adjacent properties managed by the City of Seattle's Cedar River Watershed and Washington Department of Natural Resources. The plan will address recreational uses on over 4,000 acres with trails assessment work to begin November 2003. A trails committee is providing agency, community, and recreational user's input for the plan.



Farm & Forest CONTACTS

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Tax Incentive Programs

Ted Sullivan 206-205-5170

Noxious Weeds

King County Noxious Weed Control
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Email

firstname.lastname@metrokc.gov



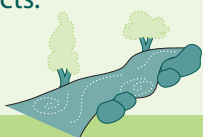
Farm & Forest NEWS

This newsletter is a publication of King County's Office of Rural and Resource Programs in the Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

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Editor: Mary Rabourn
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Rural Community Partnership Grants Newaukum Creek, Enumclaw

Mid Puget Sound Fisheries Enhancement has been awarded almost \$50,000 to create a new side channel of Newaukum Creek downstream of Mahler Park, on 58 acres acquired by the City of Enumclaw. Other work on this lively stream includes clearing blackberry vines and planting native plants, removing two miles of fencing, and surveying the creek for future restoration projects.



Grants For Culvert Replacement on Farm and Forest Land in King and Pierce Counties

Landowners or other community groups may apply for funding to replace culverts and give salmon access to upstream habitat. Help increase awareness in your community about habitat restoration. For information, visit www.nfwf.org/programs/king.htm or www.nfwf.org/programs/pierce.htm, or contact **Helena Wiley** at 206-691-0700, hwiley@evergreenfc.com.

The Family Forest Fish Blockage Program is another grant opportunity for small forest landowners to improve fish passage. Contact **Benj Wadsworth** for details.



Prepare your home for the soggy season, for information visit <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/flood/Before.htm>

Link to LinkUp partner!

For small forest owners: an exciting opportunity for milling and creating high value products from hardwoods. Visit http://dnr.metrokc.gov/linkup/partner_list.htm, or call **Linda Vane** at **206-296-8042**.

Proposed Updates to Land-Use Regulations

The second public review draft of the Critical Areas, Clearing and Grading, and Stormwater Ordinances is available. Public comments are requested through November 21, 2003. For more information, go to www.metrokc.gov/ddes/cao.

Calendar

Living with Predators Lecture:

November 18, 6:30 PM, Carco Theatre, Renton

Livestock Management***Workshop Series:***

Mud, manure, pastures, streams and wetlands, November - February

Conservation District Annual***Bare Root Native Tree and******Shrub Sale:***

January 1 - February 13

Farm Forestry Tours:

Spring 2004

For information or to register for any of the above: contact roseanne.campagna@kingcd.org, or 206-764-3410 ext. 125.

Living on the Land:

**Contact Greta Cook
206-205-3105, or
greta.cook@metrokc.gov**

Extension Livestock***Advisor Training:***

**January 14 – March 24,
contact Greta Cook.**

Land/Water Stewards Training:

**Contact Paul Racette at
206-205-3171 or
paul.racette@metrokc.gov.**

Forest Stewardship Classes:

**January 21 – March 24, Vashon Island, contact Steve Sax at
206-205-3132 or
steve.sax@metrokc.gov.**



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Department of Natural Resources and Parks

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<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/forestry>
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<http://www.pugetsoundfresh.org>

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